

Oral Questions

fiscal year. We have accepted their recommendation. We will be spending \$300 million more.

As to the issue of how and whether every Canadian unemployed can qualify tomorrow morning for two or three years of training, I cannot say that because that program of retraining is developed according to the needs of the regions of the country. In certain areas for certain trades, yes, this is possible; for others it is not. But this is a developmental program that will continue. I think that unemployed Canadians will benefit from it.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): The minister probably knows that in B.C. the answer is "yes"; in Newfoundland it is "maybe", and in Ontario it is "no" to two or three years of retraining. So it is an inconsistent policy. The policy was inconsistent, now it is unjustifiable. The new policy states that you may seek two or three years of retraining at a community college, but not at a university.

The minister is dictating the type of training an individual must pursue. Will the minister reverse his decision and allow UI recipients to attend either a community college or a university?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the Labour Force Development Board and the government are open to any suggestions for trying to improve how we train Canadians.

We have under the Prosperity Initiative led by Madam Marie José Drouin and David McCamus groups of people throughout the country looking at the whole training system we have which includes both the trade side and the post-secondary university side of it.

If the hon. member or his party have suggestions, I am sure that they would be considered because this is about trying to equip Canadians with the tools they need to keep this country competitive. Any suggestions in that regard will be welcome.

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YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Youth.

The government has not yet announced the budget for Challenge '92 program, the student summer employment program. In view of the massive levels of student unemployment, around 15 per cent last summer and expected to be worse this year, surely a decision is

needed now. When will the government respond to the real and pressing employment needs of Canada's students? When?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Minister of State (Youth) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, as my hon. friend knows, the program is going on known as Challenge '92, as he called it, and the numbers and details should be announced as soon as possible.

[Translation]

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the same minister. We are now in one of the worst recessions in Canada's history. Students have to cope with all kinds of additional costs for education, and I am thinking of the GST and the alarming increase in tuition fees and other expenses.

Students feel utterly helpless. When will this government produce a student employment policy that is commensurate with their needs?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Youth), Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, of course I do not agree with the hon. member's opening remarks, especially about this being the worst recession, because I am sure everyone will recall that the worst recession was in 1981-82, when the hon. member's party was in power.

As for the summer program, with which the hon. member is familiar since he referred to it as Challenge '92, it is an excellent program which we have had for a number of years and which will still be around this summer. The figures will be announced as soon as possible, probably this week, and I am sure the hon. member and all students will be delighted.

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BILL C-55

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. Bill C-55 would give the Conservative Government the power to do serious damage to public service pensions. The government could give itself a premium holiday by refusing to pay employer contributions identical to those paid by the employee. It could change the rate of interest on the pension fund, without consultation. It could reduce indexation, and it could do